

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 PM-07 USIE-00 H-03 NIC-01 OMB-01

DRC-01 EURE-00 INRE-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

/082 W

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O R 171118Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 716

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINT SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH ELECTORATE WEAKENS LONG-GOVERNING SOCIAL  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND VOTES VIRTUAL SOCIALIST-  
BOURGEOIS STALEMATE

SUMMARY: SWEDISH ELECTION HAS COME DOWN TO SOMETHING  
VERY CLOSE TO DEAD HEAT. CERTAINTY AS TO ALLOCATION OF  
RIKSDAG SEATS--WHETHER 176-174 OR 175-175--MAY NOT BE  
AVAILABLE FOR SEVERAL DAYS. HOWEVER, PALME GOVERNMENT  
REMAINS IN OFFICE AND CHANCES ARE PALME WILL ATTEMPT  
TO HANG ON EVEN IN 175-175 SITUATION--EITHER BY COALITION  
WITH A BOURGEOIS PARTY OR CONTINUING WITH WEAKENED  
MINORITY ONE-PARTY GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. IT WILL BE AT LEAST 24 HOURS BEFORE UNOFFICIAL FINAL  
COUNT OF BALLOTS IS COMPLETED. IF THE FINAL APPORTIONMENT  
OF RIKSDAG SEATS DEPENDS ON A FEW THOUSAND VOTERS (AS IS  
ARITHMETICALLY QUITE POSSIBLE), THE ISSUE RESTS WITH THE  
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COUNT OF ABOUT 52,000 BALLOTS MAILED BEFORE POLLS CLOSED

SUNDAY NIGHT. MOST SHOULD BE COUNTED BY TUESDAY. IN EVENT OF A HAIRLINE OUTCOME AS TO WHETHER DIVISION OF MANDATES IS TO BE 176-174 OR 175-175, FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE ON BASIS OF OFFICIAL COUNT OF RETURNS. IT WOULD BE A WEEK BEFORE THIS FORMAL PROCEDURE IS COMPLETED.

2. HENCE, THE NO. 1 QUESTION OF 1973 SWEDISH ELECTIONS REMAINS UNANSWERED ON MORNING AFTER: WILL THE PALME GOVERNMENT SURVIVE? ON THE BASIS OF UNOFFICIAL COUNT (98.7 PERCENT COMPLETE), SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THEIR COMMUNIST SUPPORTERS HAVE 176 SEATS TO THE COMBINED TOTAL OF THREE BOURGEOIS PARTIES OF 174. IF THIS MARGIN HOLDS, PRIMIN PALME WILL CONTINUE TO GOVERN. THE QUESTION FOR HIM WILL BE WHETHER TO CONTINUE WITH A ONE-PARTY MINORITY SOCDEM GOVERNMENT WEAKER THAN BEFORE OR TO LOOK FOR A COALITION WITH ONE OF THE "MIDDLE" PARTIES, LIBERAL OR CENTER.

3. IF LATE RETURNS PRODUCE A 175-175 STALEMATE, THE PECULIAR SWEDISH CONSTITUTION DECREES THAT THE NATION WILL, IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, BE GOVERNED BY LOTTERY. CONSTITUTION PROVIDES THAT, WHEN RIKSDAG VOTE IS A TIE, TWO PIECES OF PAPER, ONE MARKED YES, ONE NO, ARE PLACED IN AN URN AND ONE IS DRAWN. THAT DECIDES THE ISSUE. ON ELECTION NIGHT CENTER LEADER THORBJORN FALLDIN PROBABLY EXPRESSED CONSENSUS VIEW WHEN HE TOLD PRESS SWEDEN SHOULD NOT BE GOVERNED BY LOTTERY.

4. THERE WOULD BE TWO WAYS FOR SWEDEN TO ESCAPE THIS FATE: (1) FOR SOCDEMS TO FORM COALITION WITH ONE OF BOURGEOIS PARTIES, THEREBY ACQUIRING SOLID GOVERNING MAJORITY; (2) FOR PALME--PROBABLY BY AGREEMENT WITH OPPOSITION--TO CALL NEW ELECTION. ONE COULD EXPECT PALME TO TRY FIRST COURSE FIRST.

5. PALME GOVERNMENT ALSO WOULD HAVE OPTION IN 175-175 SITUATION OF CONTINUING TO GOVERN AS AT PRESENT, SECURE IN KNOWLEDGE THAT BOURGEOIS BLOC COULD NOT BRING HIM DOWN AND COUNTING ON HIS PARTY'S POLITICAL KNOW-HOW TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GET ESSENTIAL LEGISLATION THROUGH. TALKING TO REPORTERS ON TV LAST NIGHT, PALME WAS CAREFUL TO PRESERVE HIS OPTIONS, IN ANY FORESEEABLE OUTCOME OF BALLOTING, NOTABLY NOT REPEAT NOT EXCLUDING POSSIBILITY OF COALITION WITH LIBERALS.

6. ALL THIS ADDS UP TO THE FACT THAT PALME IS STILL IN THE SADDLE IN STOCKHOLM. HE IS NOT LIKELY TO BE UNHORSED.

BUT HIS GRIP ON THE REINS IS WEAKENED. HE MAY FEEL COM-  
PELLED TO REACH OUT TO ANOTHR PARTY TO HELP HIM HANG ON.

7. ANALYSIS OF VOTING PATTERNS AND INDIVIDUAL PARTIES  
FATE IS UPCOMING IN SEPTEL.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** COALITION GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION, ELECTORATE, POLITICAL PARTIES, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 SEP 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973STOCKH03289  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** STOCKHOLM  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t19730929/aaaaauzp.tel  
**Line Count:** 121  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 SEP 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12-Sep-2001 by freemaal>; APPROVED <01-Nov-2001 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SWEDISH ELECTORATE WEAKENS LONG-GOVERNING SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND VOTES VIRTUAL SOCIALIST-  
**TAGS:** PINT, SW, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005